



International Foster Care Organisation  
Registered UK Charity: 1081324  
[www.ifco.info](http://www.ifco.info)

Laan van Meerdervoort 70 2517 AN Den Haag, The Netherlands  
Tel: +3170 346 2153 Fax: +3170 427 9242 E-mail: [ifco@ifco.info](mailto:ifco@ifco.info)

**IFCO E-Newsletter / 6**  
**March 2007**

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**IFCO invites you to translate this newsletter into your own language and send it further to contacts in your country and elsewhere who may not yet be IFCO members (membership details are on the [www.ifco.info](http://www.ifco.info) web site) - thank you!**

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**1. Update from IFCO's Secretary General Gaylene Lawrence on the Conference in New Zealand**

"My focus since before Christmas has been the International Foster Care Conference. All the hard work has been fully rewarded with fabulous memories that will be treasured forever. The delegates, plenary speakers, workshop presenters, youth, van drivers, university staff & grounds, Powhiri, and of course the wonderful team of IFCO 'All Blacks' helped make the conference an outstanding success.

There were 506 delegates registered from 27 countries which gave it a truly international flavour. Australia, Ireland and Norway had the greatest number of overseas delegates with USA and UK not far behind. It has been so nice receiving all the lovely emails, thank you.

Many foster carers have gone home dreaming up ways of how they can get to Ireland – lots of us from New Zealand will be saving to get there!

Even if you were not able to attend, you are able to go to the [www.ifconz07.org.nz](http://www.ifconz07.org.nz) To receive emails of the presenters for any papers you wish to secure.

Thank you everyone for making a huge effort to attend, to your own families, to your children in care, to the agencies / organisations that supported you and to our New Zealand sponsor Child Youth & Family."

**2. Kiwi young people seek positive changes for New Zealand's foster care system at IFCO Conference 2007**

The following article was submitted by Naidene McClew, Project Coordinator from Dingwall Trust, a foster children's home in Auckland, New Zealand. With experience in New Zealand's foster care system, three young people urged Child Youth and Family (New Zealand's statutory care and protection service), to let young people finish their secondary schooling before being discharged. This was one of the many issues of concern covered in their workshop presentation at the IFCO Conference in

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Hamilton last month. Currently New Zealand young people can be discharged from care as young as 17 when they are often still at school.

Renee, Janelle, and Louise (surnames omitted for privacy reasons) are all involved in the 'Launch: Care to Independence' pilot based at Dingwall Trust. Currently, New Zealand is the only Western country in the world not to have a leaving care service available to teenagers leaving care. The support consists of giving practical help like finding a job, gaining a drivers' license, building their self-confidence and finding suitable flat or boarding accommodation.

The pilot allowed funded through Child Youth and Family is due to end in June and Dingwall Trust is currently advocating for the programme to be rolled out nationally. The project also allowed young people to have a say about what happens them when they are in foster care, and to challenge the lack of communication between social worker and child. In terms of changes for a more positive outlook for these children, the young people suggested introducing the idea of personal foster care plans for each young person would be allowed expression to any problems experienced with placements and social workers; and also to explain how one would like these issues dealt with.

Furthermore, the young people supported the idea of personal "lifebooks" for each child in care, currently being piloted by Child Youth and Family. These books are designed for caregivers and children to explore family and foster history of the child, helping the child to make connections to their past, and understand why they are apart from their families.

If you are interested in reading the full article please visit the homepage of our website: <http://www.ifco.info/>

Dingwall Trust is currently producing a Lifeskills DVD for young people called 'Flat Out'. If you are interested in receiving information about this new exciting resource email: [flatout@dingwall.co.nz](mailto:flatout@dingwall.co.nz)

The young people mentioned above are currently putting together a resource for youth rights in care in collaboration with Youthlaw. If you are interested in supporting them with this project please contact: Naidene McClew [mcclew@dingwall.co.nz](mailto:mcclew@dingwall.co.nz)



Photo submitted by Naidene McClew, from left: Naidene McClew, Jannette Brown, Louise, Mariana, Sarah Ashton, Janelle

### **3. IFCO - RELAF Training Regional Seminar 17-19 May, 2007: “The Right to Live in a Family: Foster Care and Other Alternatives”**

The IFCO RELAF Network, together with CEPES and GAFA, wishes to gather all those involved in the development of foster care in Latin America in an unprecedented event. The IFCO RELAF Seminar will bring together individuals and organisations involved in and committed to advocating for the rights of families and communities living in Latin America. All those interested in the development of foster care in Latin America are welcome!

**Why this Seminar?:** The growing concern for children deprived of parental care drives us into looking for alternatives framed within the safeguarding of rights. In Argentina, the recent report about Children Deprived of Liberty, produced by the National Secretariat of Human Rights and UNICEF, revealed the situation of thousands of institutionalised kids in our country. Thus, the urgent need to start a des-institutionalisation process and the provision of alternatives for their care and protection. In Latin America, the development of family-based alternatives in the region since the 1980s decade, and specially over the last few years, is also a sign of this search for alternatives. The current drafting, at world level, of the United Nations Guidelines for Children Without Parental Care, shows the need to start taking the subject as a public policy as established by the UN Convention, in order to restore violated rights for children and adolescents.

It is an excellent time to share experiences on the development of foster care at world level.

**Background:** IFCO has a long-standing tradition of world conference organisation since its birth in 1981. The last IFCO conference in the region was in July 2003, in La Plata City, Buenos Aires, Argentina, with an attendance of almost 700 people from 33 countries.

**Who can participate:** Addressed to all child care stakeholders in Latin America, from all cultures and religions: families, youth, State (Judicial, Legislative and Executive Power, and all governmental child care bodies), community (organisations from the civil society and individuals interested), technicians (professionals and practitioners from all areas of child care, including Health and Education), and mass media.

**Modality and contents:** There will be panels, aimed at sharing and exchanging information among all those involved in the field. The focus will be placed on the different actions for the effective implementation of the UN Convention (specially Art. 20), particularly on foster care as an intervention tool, within the national and regional environments, and how to promote it within the regional legislations. Furthermore, the damaging effects of institutionalisation on children and families will be assessed.

Themes addressed will be: Policies and programmes to familias at risk, Foster care as an alternative for the fulfillment of “the right to live in a family,” and testimonies from those involved in out-of-home care.

**Language:** The Seminar’s official language will be Spanish.

**Location Information:**  
**Hotel Hermitage, Avenida Colón 1621, Mar del Plata, Bs-As., Argentina**

**Registration and costs:**

- \* Participants from the Latin American region: Argentinian Pesos \$100
- \* Participants from outside the region: Argentinian Pesos \$150
- \* IFCO members: Argentinian Pesos \$80

Please download registration form from website and send by e-mail to the Secretariat: <http://relaf.ifco.info/mardel/index.html>

**Secretariat:**

**Fundación Cepes - Moreno 3744, CP 7600 Mar del Plata**  
**Tel. 00 54 (0) 223 4930341 / Fax. 00 54 (0) 223 4757177 / e-mail**  
**[seminarioifco2007mdq@gmail.com](mailto:seminarioifco2007mdq@gmail.com)**  
**<http://relaf.ifco.info/mardel/index.html>**

**4. Next IFCO Conference in MALTA, 18-21 November**

We are happy to announce the next IFCO Regional Conference will be held in Malta on 18-21 of November. Registration is now open!! Please visit IFCO2007Malta website for more information at: <http://malta2007.ifco.info/>

**5. An update on IFCO's newest project in Romania**

Twinning Light Project and IFCO together with The Ministry of Justice in The Netherlands and BAAF UK started the project "Strengthening the administrative capacity of the Romanian Office for Adoptions in promoting best practices in domestic adoption" with a first mission to Bucharest. The input of the experts will lead to an assessment of the current situation and training in good practices as well as quality improvements of the competencies of the Romanian professionals. In this we focus on the whole adoption triangle: the children, the birth parents, and the adoptive families for pre/post support.

**6. The 5<sup>th</sup> African Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect: 27-29 March**  
**"HIV/AIDS and Children: The challenges of the care for and protection of children in Africa"**

Please visit their website for updated information on this current conference in Uganda: [www.anppcanug.org](http://www.anppcanug.org), or email to: [conference@anppcanug.org](mailto:conference@anppcanug.org)

**7. Support UNICEF's campaign against UK Child Trafficking**

Every year, over a million children are trafficked into the modern-day equivalent of slavery. They are secretly transported across borders and sold like commodities or trafficked within countries for the sole purpose of exploitation. It is a crime that violates the basic rights of children, a crime which can - and does - destroy lives. Some 1.2 million children are now estimated by the UN to be trafficked annually. To achieve our ultimate aim of ending the exploitation of children, UNICEF is working to build a protective environment where children can grow up safe from exploitation.

UNICEF UK's campaign to End Child Trafficking aims to raise public awareness regarding child trafficking and exploitation and raise funds to support practical programmes which protect children from trafficking.

As Britain prepares to commemorate 200 years since the abolition of the slave trade, a new Panos exhibition at St. Paul's Cathedral reveals how much human trafficking is a bitter reality for thousands of women, men and children in the UK today. The show is produced by Panos Pictures and in partnership with Amnesty International, Anti-Slavery International, Eaves and UNICEF UK. The participating agencies are lobbying the UK government to make good on its recent promise to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings in order to guarantee minimum standards of protection and support for trafficked people.

For more information about this exhibition, which runs until the end of this week in the UK, please visit their website at: <http://www.slavebritain.org.uk/>

You may also visit this site for general information on this topic and the organizations dedicated to stop human trafficking.

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**You are welcome to use any or all of this information in your own newsletters, magazines or e-publications as long as you acknowledge IFCO as the source.**